

# Statement of Essential Beliefs

The following beliefs are the core of essential beliefs from a biblical and historical perspective embraced by Covenant Hope Fellowship.<sup>1</sup> While a full understanding and the ability to adequately articulate these beliefs is not required, the explicit rejection of any one of these particular beliefs disqualifies one from membership at Covenant Hope Fellowship.

## ***The Essentials We Believe:***

### **About God**

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. The Father is neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit. The Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son.

Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 45:6-7, 90:2, 110:1; Isaiah 45:5-6, 46:9-10; Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19; John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

### **About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and is both fully God and fully human. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless human life, and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He physically rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:20-23, 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 2:52, 24:1-53; John 1:1-14, 29, 10:1-18; 14: 3-6, 10-30; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4, 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-34; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:3-14; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:1-3, 4:14-15, 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7

<sup>1</sup> A more comprehensive description of the church's beliefs may be found in *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000 edition) posted on the church's website.

### **About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer spiritual gifts when they are saved. Christians seek to live under the Spirit's control daily.

John 16:7-13, 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18

## **About the Bible**

The Bible is God's Word to humanity. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme and sufficient source of truth and the basis for Christian belief and practice. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error.

Psalm 19:7-11, 119:105,160; Proverbs 30:5; 2 Timothy 3:16, 1:13; 2 Peter 1:20- 21

## **About Human Beings**

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of humanity (Jesus excluded) is marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." All people are sinners by birth and action. Sin separates people from God, spiritually condemns them, and makes them liable to God's final judgment. All of creation experiences the harmful effects of sin.

Genesis 1:27, 6:5; Psalm 8:3-6, 51:5; Isaiah 53:6, 59:1-2; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:18-32, 3:23, 5:8, 12-21; 7:18, 8:22; Ephesians 2:1-3

## **About Salvation**

Only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can a person be reconciled to God, be saved from sin's penalty, and experience true life and joy. Salvation is God's free gift. A person can never make up for their sin by self-improvement or good works. Those who follow Christ have been, by God's grace, converted from following sin and self to following Jesus as the Lord of their life.

John 3:16-18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26, 5:1, 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Titus 3:5

## **About Eternity**

There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as Lord will be raised to eternal reward in heaven. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment in hell.

Matthew 25:31-46; John 3:16; 5:28-29; 14:17; Acts 24:15; Romans 6:23; 8:17-18; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9; Revelation 20:15

While the essential beliefs are non-negotiable, the membership of Covenant Hope Fellowship is a diverse body of followers of Christ who have various convictions on secondary beliefs (e.g. convictions regarding: homeschooling, parenting styles, media/entertainment, styles of music, etc.). With this in mind, all members acknowledge the following regarding non-essential beliefs.

## ***Non-Essential Beliefs***

### **In essential beliefs our membership has unity**

Eph. 4:4-6- "There is one Body and one Spirit... there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all."

### **In non-essential beliefs our membership has diversity**

Romans 14:1, 4, 12, 22- "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters... Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God... So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God."

Colossians 2:16-19- "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God."

### **In all our beliefs we show love**

1 Cor. 13:2- "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."